



In February 2004 I (SM) spent a few weeks visiting Japan, ostensibly to visit my sister. Using the excellent train network (cheap at £100 per week using a JR Pass), I travelled the full length of the country from the frozen wastes of Hokkaido to the crane laden fields of Kyushu. Armed only with my little sister's ski jacket and a huge stash of Tesco *Value* peanuts to keep warm, I walked for miles and braved -13° C to score all the winter specials. Un-photographed highlights included Blakiston's Fish-owl, Copper and Green Pheasants, Grey and Yellow-throated Buntings, Black-faced Spoonbill and Japanese Woodpecker, Murrelet and Accentor.



Hooded and White-naped Cranes, part of a flock of 7,000 - if you like cranes this is the place



Magpie? Oystercatcher? Not sure, ID is really hard sometimes...



Northern Bullfinch *P. p. griseiventris* – my “Bird of the Trip”, Oriental Turtle-dove in a park



A top-notch **White's Thrush** on my last day, I still hadn't “mastered” the camera...



Two farmland birds in two farms: **Meadow Bunting** and **White-naped Crane**



Pan-Holarctic Dross



Chestnut-eared Bunting, Dusky Thrush (common in parks), Blue Rock Thrush (*M. s. philippensis*)



Three of my favourites: Asian Rosy-finches, Demoiselle Crane (at night), Saunderson's gull –cute as



Daurian Redstart and Bean goose (*A. f. middendorffi*): candidate for ugliest goose in the world



Red-crowned Cranes, BBC Wildlife Photograph of the Year (If I'd only entered...)